

I call on you to hold an official public hearing in my state.

Before the disastrous 2003 decision to weaken media ownership rules (which a federal court has now overturned), you held only one official public hearing. Further, FCC officials met behind closed doors 71 times with major broadcasters – but only five times with public interest groups. And to justify your actions, you used deceptive, industry-sponsored research data.

The will of Big Media had been heeded at the expense of American citizens and democracy itself. This has to end. Before you rewrite the ownership rules, I demand an official public FCC hearing in my state, impartial and verifiable research, and transparent debates.

It is time to put the needs of democracy – a diverse, skeptical, independent and competitive media system – ahead of profit-hungry media giants.

Whatever is said about our airways must be said in a public forum in order to ensure that American democracy is not subverted by multi-national conglomerates. A robust media comprised of a multitude of voices and perspectives can greatly aid in the public debate, which is most critical in this difficult period. Consider the state of the media in Italy or Russia, where media consolidation has transformed television, radio and print into mere agitprop. May we never walk down that path.